

Help Create a Miracle.



Sara was only in her 30th week of pregnancy when she suddenly went into labor. Scared and shocked, she delivered baby Ella, who weighed just over 3lbs. Baby Ella was transported to our Children's Hospital and spent eight weeks in our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. She is now a healthy, active toddler who is known to her parents as their "Little Miracle."

The Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida is the *only* children's hospital between Tampa and Miami and treats children from all of Southwest Florida—regardless of their families' ability to pay for our services. Please consider a gift to the Lee Memorial Health System Foundation this holiday season.

Now more than ever, donations are needed to help provide life-saving care to the tiniest members of our community.

Make a gift.
Make an impact.



Your miracle is waiting. Call 239-985-3550
or visit www.leememorial.org

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

BY CHUCK SHEPHERD

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People different from us

Larry and Diana Moyer set out in November from Beaver Dam, Wis., in their oversized RV to spend some warm days in St. Petersburg, Fla. Since they travel with their pets, Jack (Diana's "service" kangaroo) and Edward (an elderly goat that uses a cart for mobility because of front-leg paralysis), their route south was circuitous because of some states' restrictions on exotic pets. The RV broke down three times. In Florida, Larry had a stroke and

was hospitalized for two days. Then, a fuse box short-circuited, and the RV burned up, torching their money and ID. Diana was hospitalized for smoke inhalation. With Red Cross help, they found a motel that accepted goats (but not kangaroos, so Jack went overnight to a wildlife facility). At press time, according to a Tampa Tribune report, the couple had bought a junk car and were headed home, with Jack curled up in Diana's lap. ■

Budget relief for the California government

A homeless transient, Steven Butcher, 50, was convicted of starting fires in the Los Padres National Forest near Santa Barbara in 2002 and 2006 (the latter which burned 163,000 acres) and in November was sen-

tenced to nearly four years in prison. When Butcher gets out, he can work on the other part of his sentence, as he was also ordered to pay back the state for the fires' costs, in the amount of \$101 million. ■

Leading economic indicators

When the Poway Unified School District near San Diego cut teachers' printing budgets this year, some handout-intensive instructors had to dip into their own pockets to keep their students supplied. Calculus teacher Tom Farber decided in September to sell ad space on

page one of his exams, at \$10 for a quiz and up to \$30 on the semester final. As of November, he told the San Diego Union-Tribune, only parent-sponsored inspirational messages have been bought, but he said he would welcome certain retailers' ads. ■

Economic Stimulus:

A British surgeon will spend an estimated 250,000 pounds (\$370,000) to equip her luxury home in Gloucestershire with a state-of-the-art, three-room suite for her two Great Danes, including cameras so that she can monitor them via the Internet while she is away. Instead of an ordinary dog door, a

retina scanner will control entry, and rather than rely on human stewards, the big darlings will be dispensed filtered water and dry food automatically in self-cleaning bowls. A temperature-regulated saline spa is available for relaxing dips before turning in for the night on sheepskin-lined dog beds. ■

The continuing crisis

A group of recently published cookbooks touting imaginative dishes served by world-renowned chefs includes Ferran Adria's volume on just his everyday fare at the world's top-rated elBulli in Spain. Probably too complex for home cooking are the parmesan ice cream sandwiches, quail eggs with crispy caramel coating, calamari tube ravioli with

coconut gel, and especially the preserved tuna-oil air (to create foam). However, for about \$250, wannabes can purchase Adria's "Sferificacion MiniKit" with utensils and guidance on more manageable possibilities, such as watermelon soup with tomato spheres. ■

Science on the cutting edge

► "This is a rare occurrence," said a Loyola University (Chicago) neurology professor in September, describing to WebMD.com only the seventh reported case of someone's suffering a stroke during orgasm. Several things must be present in series to create the condition, including having an unnatural opening between the two upper chambers of the heart (a "PFO"). Also, a blood clot must develop and break loose and then get sucked through the PFO at the moment of ecstasy, sending it

directly to the brain.

► In October, ABC News profiled a 6-year-old boy with a rare coordination disorder called Angelman syndrome, which makes the afflicted seem stiff and jerky, but which also fosters a cheerful, gregarious (though non-verbal) personality, leading the disorder to be known as the "happy puppet syndrome." Seizures are a consequence, but so is excessive laughter, which is a major hindrance to early diagnosis, according to a pediatrics professor. ■

Least competent criminals

► Robert Garrett, 33, and Jesse Dyer, 32, were arrested in Lincoln, Neb., in November and charged with burglary and the theft of a 55-inch TV, which they had taken to their car, only to realize that it wouldn't fit. When a next-door neighbor spotted them, they tried to bribe her for \$100, to hold the set until they could return with a bigger car, but she called the police.

► Joseph Barton, 62, and an associate

were arrested in November by local drug officials in Hurley, N.Y., and charged with a marijuana growing and distribution scheme of "epic scope and sophistication," according to a Middletown Times Herald-Record report. Besides the 45 pounds of marijuana seized, the chief evidence is copies of Barton's self-made biographical DVD chronicling a life of drug deals, describing candidly his adventures and business acumen. ■

Sat nav issues

More people who put their brains on "standby" while using satellite navigation systems:

► In July, a group of 10 children and 16 adults from California were stranded in their cars in wilderness near cliffs close to the Grand Canyon, to which they had been misdirected by their navigation system. Rescuers were able to talk them back the next day on their cell phones.

► A truck driver hauling a 32-ton load from Turkey through several European countries headed for Gibraltar in the southern tip of Spain missed his destination by about 1,600 miles, winding up at a dead end in Skegness, England. (Gibraltar is a British territory, though nowhere near the British Isles, but both places have a "Coral Road," which was the destination.) ■